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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2051  
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SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - APRIL 16

#### Leading Stories

1. An elder woman died from bacteria a few days after the Health Ministry warned of an outbreak in Santiago. Dailies also reported on yet another corruption scandal involving Investigations Police (PDI); former PDI official denounced the presence of official cars outside a well-known and expensive cabaret and who used them.

#### U.S.-Related News

2. President Obama's op-ed, "Choosing a Better Future for the Americas" received prominent display. Highlighted quote: "We must chose the future over the past, because we know that the future holds enormous opportunities if we work together" (El Mercurio, member of the "Grupo de Diarios de America," GDA, 4/16).

3. There will be no Obama-Bachelet bilateral at the Summit of the Americas. However, given the enormous number of requests for such meetings, the U.S. President has chosen to meet with UNASUR members as a group on Saturday, chaired by President Bachelet, and then separately with Central America and Caribbean leaders (El Mercurio, 4/16).

4. President Bachelet said President Obama's upcoming meeting with UNASUR leaders at the SOA is important "beyond the results," because it's a unique opportunity to "listen and discuss" and is the first encounter of the U.S. administration with Latin America. Bachelet stressed the expectation among all countries about the kind of relationship that the United States should establish with the region, especially with regard to decreasing poverty, generation jobs, and creating more opportunities (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 4,200, 4/16).

5. Editorial on the lifting of travel and remittance restrictions to Havana, entitled, "Obama's Pragmatism Toward Cuba": "In the first bilingual (press) conference ever in the White House, the National Security Council's principal advisor for Latin America announced the lifting of travel and remittance restrictions to Cuba.... The announcement is yet more proof of the style that President Obama has introduced to U.S. foreign policy.... But most importantly, it shows a revision in strategy to condition the relationship of the United States with the Castro regime, which until now has depended on showing progress in democratization and human rights. The announcement... does not foreshadow the end of the economic embargo... but there is no doubt that President Obama is acting with pragmatism and realism, two elements that were missing in the administration of his predecessor and are necessary to launch a new

phase in Inter-American relations."

¶6. ARCIS University professor Rafael Berastegui argues that despite President Obama's good will, there won't be major changes in the relationship between the United States and Latin America, primarily because of the enormous challenges that the U.S. president faces in Iran, Afghanistan-Pakistan and the global crisis. "Obama will express his hope to generate closer ties with Latin America, but that's as far as he will go. These promising gestures and the goodwill can only turn into concrete deeds if the United States resolves its priority problems, and Latin America is not one of them," said the professor. (La Nacion, 4/16).

¶7. President Obama has developed a policy of symbols and gestures toward the Hispanic world and is now acting with concrete actions by arriving at the SOA with the President of Mexico, coordinating a meeting with President Bachelet in the White House, and lifting restrictions against Cuba. Latin America is watching how the United States will relate to the region, but it also wants to see specific proposals to help the region face the economic crisis and global warming (La Nacion, 4/16).

#### Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Meeting

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¶8. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Foreign Affairs Minister Mariano Fernandez met yesterday in Washington. Both officials talked about the California-Chile program, a possible alternative energy agreement and the visit of a large U.S. delegation to the Americas Competitiveness Forum in Santiago in September. The discussion, however, focused primarily on Cuba. Fernandez told the Secretary that Chile viewed the decision to lift travel and remittance restrictions to Havana as "a positive development." He also reiterated that Chile "has always" objected to the embargo. Fernandez said that no date had been set for an Obama-Bachelet bilateral, noting that his information request was "in response to the invitation personally made" by President Obama (El Mercurio, 4/16).

¶9. Foreign Minister Fernandez and Secretary Clinton discussed the Summit of the Americas (SOA) agenda, which will be marked by the financial crisis and Cuba's reentry to the OAS. Both also talked about President Obama's meeting next Saturday with UNASUR leaders. Fernandez said that a Bachelet-Obama bilateral meeting would take place "as soon as we can coordinate the agendas of the two presidents" (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 4/16).

¶10. Chile welcomes the shift in U.S. policy toward Latin America since Obama took office, said Foreign Minister Fernandez yesterday after meeting with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Fernandez said the meeting helped explain "the direction" of those changes. Secretary Clinton said, "We have plans to further and strengthen (bilateral) relations in the years to come" (Diario Financiero, business and financial, circ. 30,000, 4/16).

#### OECD Accession

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¶11. Interview with Nicola Bonucci of the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation's (OECD) legislative office. Asked about Chile's joining the organization, Bonucci noted, "Chile has done its homework." However, he admitted that the organization believes that Chile "will need more time" to work on environmental issues and other measures. He noted he had seen the draft legislation addressing bank secrecy, which he commended (Mercurio, 4/16).

SIMONS